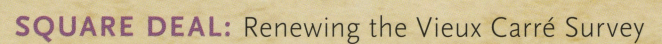


WINTER 2026



SAVE THE DATE

ECHOES of INNOVATION

Musical Louisiana: America's Cultural Heritage

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the 18th installment of Musical Louisiana: America's Cultural Heritage, the annual series presented by the Historic New Orleans Collection and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. This year's program will be in partnership with curator and cultural historian Alvin Jackson of The Historic Treme Collection and Treme's Petit Jazz Museum. Performers and participants will include the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, OperaCréole, pianist Oscar Rossignoli, and the Black Men of Labor.

Dedicated to the study of Louisiana's contributions to the world of classical music, this award-winning series reaches thousands of people through live performance as well as broadcasts and online video streaming of the concert.

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 4, 2026,
7:30 P.M.

Cathedral-Basilica
of St. Louis King
of France

WITH SUPPORT FROM

Steinway Piano Gallery New Orleans
New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Foundation

EXHIBITIONS

CURRENT

The Trail They Blazed

Through June 7, 2026
520 Royal Street

Lead sponsorship provided by the Edgar
"Dooky" Jr. and Leah Chase Family Foundation
Media sponsorship provided by WBOK 1230 AM



New Orleans Musicians in Art: Selections from the Permanent Collection

Through November 8, 2026
520 Royal Street

With support from the Ruth U. Fertel
Foundation
Media sponsorship provided by WWOZ

CONTINUING

A Vanishing Bounty: Louisiana's Coastal Environment and Culture

520 Royal Street

Lead sponsorship provided by Entergy
Media sponsorship provided by WVUE-FOX 8

French Quarter Galleries

520 Royal Street

French Quarter Life: People and Places in the Vieux Carré

520 Royal Street

UPCOMING

American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition

March 20, 2026–January 17, 2027
520 Royal Street

GENERAL HOURS

520 Royal Street

Exhibitions, the Shop at the Collection,
and the Café at the Collection*

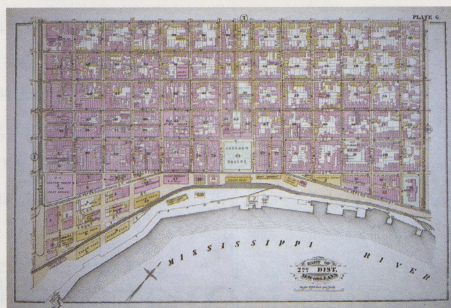
Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Sunday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

*Café closes at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday–
Saturday and 3 p.m. Tuesday and Sunday.

410 Chartres Street

Williams Research Center

Tuesday–Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Appointments are encouraged. Please email
reference@hnoc.org or call (504) 523-4662.



ON THE COVER

Plate 6. Part of Second District New Orleans (detail)

hand-colored lithograph
by John F. Braun, surveyor; A. H. Mueller, engraver; and F. Bourquin, lithographer
L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1952.8.8



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Whether it's encountering an old map in our French Quarter galleries showing your neighborhood in a distant time or finding your own family listed in an old census, nothing quite compares with the experience of connecting directly with a historic object or record. Primary sources link us to our history like nothing else, allowing us to find out for ourselves: *What did my neighborhood look like before I was born? Who lived here before I did? What were their lives like?*

HNOC collects and cares for many important documents, objects, and records that can answer these questions, and countless others—but if people don't know about them, our work is not complete. This issue's On the Job feature outlines the recent transformation of one of our most heavily used resources, the Vieux Carré Survey database, which was redesigned to reflect users' evolving needs and improve access to thousands of photographs, maps, drawings, and property records that document the French Quarter's growth and transformation from the 1700s through the 20th century.

Two timely stories in this issue also underscore the power of primary sources in bringing history to light. Using censuses, estate inventories, records of the sales of enslaved people, police records, vital records, and notarial acts, Family Historian Jari C. Honora has pieced together a new timeline of the life of the famed French Market coffee seller Rose Nicaud. This research illuminates both the facts of Nicaud's life and the wider context of urban enslavement in the 19th century. And a significant recent acquisition offers another sobering view into chattel slavery in the United States: A copy of a well-known 1863 photograph exhibits a formerly enslaved man's dramatically scarred back. This image has been distributed widely, both at the time of its creation and ever since, precisely because it provides such a direct and visceral link to this important history.

Primary sources like these are at the core of our mission, forming our ever-evolving collections and driving the narratives of our exhibitions, programming, and publications. They offer a tangible reminder of the history that surrounds us in our communities, cities, families, and homes. We hope you'll enjoy this latest issue of the *Quarterly*—and, to enable our ongoing stewardship, please see page 11 and consider a year-end gift in support of our work. —DANIEL HAMMER

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An exhibition on the Civil Rights Movement offers a variety of ways for visitors to connect with history.

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Acquisition Spotlight: The arresting photograph that galvanized the fight against slavery in the United States

EXHIBITION

The Trail They Blazed

Through June 7, 2026

520 Royal Street

Gallery admission is free.

Conversational tours are \$10 (free for members, students, and children 17 and under) and are available Wednesdays through Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Lead sponsorship provided by the Edgar "Dooky" Jr. and Leah Chase Family Foundation

Media sponsorship provided by WBOK 1230 AM

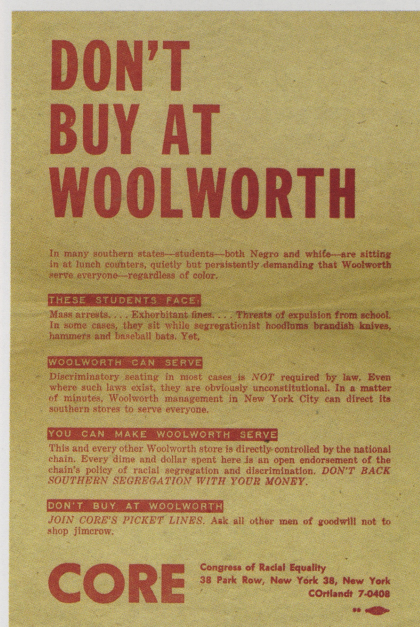
A. Woolworth boycott flier

1960

by Congress of Racial Equality

2020.0129

B. Summer campers from the TEP Center sing "We Shall Overcome" with Dodie Smith-Simmons (center). Photo by Amber Johnson, HNOC.



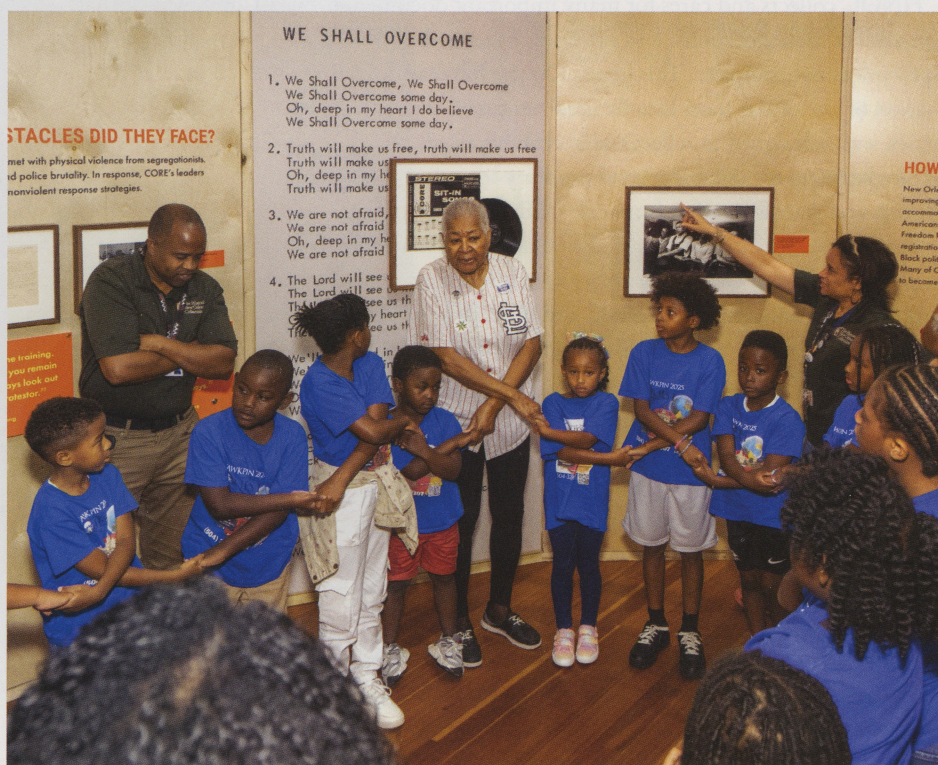
Collaborative Conversations

Specialized tours and interactive features invite museum visitors to contribute their own voices to an exhibition on the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans.

When HNOC adapted its traveling civil rights exhibition *The Trail They Blazed* as an enhanced on-site experience at 520 Royal Street, museum staffers had a chance to get creative in engaging audiences. Two unconventional tour offerings have helped diverse groups of visitors understand and connect to the show's themes of racial equality, fairness, and community activism, while thoughtfully designed interactive elements incorporate visitors' perspectives into the exhibition. "Redesigning *The Trail They Blazed* gave us the opportunity to expand content, rethink points of engagement, and reach a broader audience," says Curator/Historian Eric Seiferth. "The biggest change, however, was in the ability to control in-gallery programming."

During the summer and fall months, "Tours with a Trailblazer" offered school and camp groups a chance to experience tours led by the civil rights activists whose work is profiled in the exhibition. "Particularly for students, hearing directly from the person who has experienced such pivotal moments in history—moments that students seldom hear about—has such meaning and significance," says Education Specialist Chantell Nabonne.

Activist Dodie Smith-Simmons, who was a member of the Congress of Racial Equality in the 1960s, provided tours to summer campers, educators, and elementary school students.



Her interactive tours included a demonstration of nonviolent resistance techniques, as well as a powerful segment in which visitors joined hands and sang the civil rights anthem “We Shall Overcome.” Smith-Simmons describes teaching a group of children about segregation on city buses: “I told them, it’s because of what we did that you can sit anywhere on the bus today that you want to.”

Smith-Simmons hopes that by learning about and connecting to this history, young people will gain a sense of responsibility for taking action in their own communities. “Don’t ever think that you’re too young to do anything when you see something that’s not right. Because kids *were* involved, young kids. Look at Leona [Tate], Gail [Etienne], Tessie [Prevost], and Ruby [Bridges]: six-year-olds. I think it’s important for young people to know—for everyone to know—that you’re never too young.”

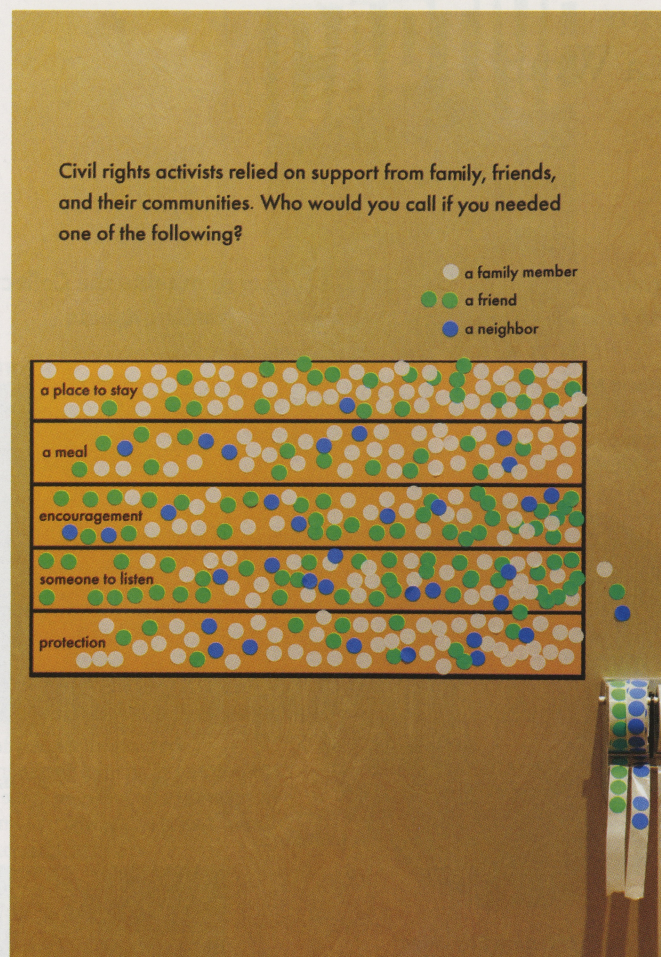
Nabonne says that visitors were very engaged in the experience. “The students asked simple but solid questions, like ‘Why did they take you to jail?’ And Ms. Dodie explained that she was there to peacefully take a stand on something she believed in, and some people didn’t agree with that. I could tell that they were quite moved by her voice and stories and captivated by her presence.”

For members of the general public, ongoing conversational tours offer a novel way to experience *The Trail They Blazed*. First used by HNOC in last year’s *Captive State* exhibition, the conversational tour format creates a dialogue among participants, inviting group members to engage more deeply with the themes of the exhibition. No prior subject knowledge is necessary, only a willingness to think about the issues presented and share one’s own opinions and experiences.

“Dialogue tours are effective at getting to the heart of what we do as interpreters—fostering relevance. In these conversations, everyone gets to think about and share ideas and personal experiences related to the stories and objects in the exhibit. In this way, visitors are also invited to learn from each other,” says Senior Interpreter Joanna Robinson, who emphasizes that the conversation-based nature of these tours means that they sometimes go in unexpected directions. “As tour facilitators, we’ve learned to be flexible, humble, and open to learning from others.”

In developing the on-site version of *The Trail They Blazed*, Exhibition Designer Cecilia Moscardó and staff curators focused on finding new ways to bring audiences into the stories presented. Even visitors who explore on their own can connect to the exhibition’s themes by engaging with interactive elements. By responding to a prompt, audience members can share their experiences and see trends among larger groups of visitors. One panel invites visitors to consider the racial makeup of their hometowns and schools, mark a wall chart with stickers to indicate their responses, and then reflect on how their answers compare to others’. The resulting gallery experience not only conveys the history of the Civil Rights Movement but also provides an ever-changing representation of how the movement’s issues affect our communities today.

Whether visiting as part of a school group, joining a conversational tour, or experiencing the galleries without a guide, visitors are invited to reflect, respond, and share their perspectives on the important issues of equity and justice that the exhibition addresses. “*The Trail They Blazed* was designed to use the past as a road map for future civic engagement,” Seiferth says. “We hoped to bring visitors into the experience with the engagement elements and tours, all in an effort to inspire them to continue to work toward better, healthier, and fairer communities.” —SIOBHÁN MCKIERNAN



C



D

C. An interactive feature asks visitors to think about how people in their communities offer support to one another. Photo by Amber Johnson, HNOC.

D. “Freedom Now” poster between 1960 and 1970 by Congress of Racial Equality 2018.0234.6

OFF-SITE

It's a Wrap

Our roundup of holdings that have appeared outside the Collection, either on loan to other institutions or in noteworthy media projects

Unficht von New-Orleans

1800; wood engraving with watercolor
by L. Lebreton
1975.17



CNN licensed 73 archival documents, photographs, and moving images for inclusion in the four-part series *New Orleans: Soul of a City*, which premiered on October 5, 2025.

The Wall Street Journal featured one HNOC image in the July 3, 2025, article "The Turban Review: A Fashion Unwound."



Portrait of a free woman of color

1837; oil on canvas
by François Fleischbein
1985.212

The Collection provided two images to the Japanese television network **NHK BS** for an episode of its program *Heroes' Choices* about Lafcadio Hearn, entitled "The Man Who Discovered Kwaidan: Koizumi Yakumo."



Japanese section, main building of World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition

between 1884 and 1885
by Edward L. Wilson
1982.127.7

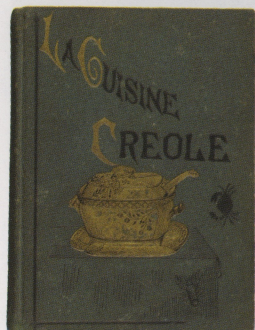
"The Fat Man" / "Detroit City Blues"

by Fats Domino
Imperial Records, 1950
gift of Timothy Bollinger, 2018.0140



La Cuisine Creole: A Collection of Culinary Recipes from Leading Chefs and Noted Creole Housewives

1885
gift of Ralph M. Pons, 77-288-RL



Mardi Gras Parade, New Orleans, La.

between 1895 and 1905; hand-colored glass slide
gift of Mr. and Mrs. Elvert M. Cormack, 1981.290.25

Netflix licensed 19 still and moving images for its three-part docuseries on Hurricane Katrina, titled *Katrina: Come Hell and High Water*. The series premiered on August 27, 2025.

Antoine "Fats" Domino and his family

1957
by Franck-Bertacci Photographers
1994.94.2.2299



Flood Street, flooded by Hurricane Betsy

1965; gelatin silver print
by G. E. Arnold
1974.25.11.75



A New Chapter

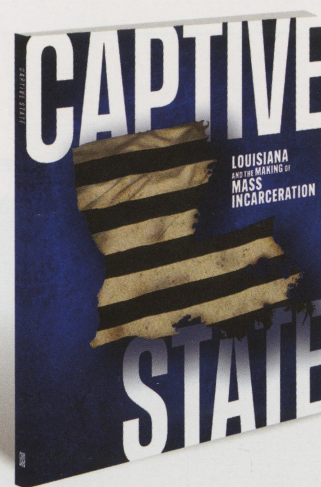
From a 2024 exhibition to a new book, *Captive State* shares a moving message about slavery and incarceration in Louisiana.

Representing the culmination of years of curatorial collaboration with a community advisory board, the exhibition *Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration* (July 2024–February 2025) has been honored with the John Thompson Award for Courage and Justice from Innocence and Justice Louisiana (formerly Innocence Project New Orleans) and a gold exhibition award from the Southeastern Museums Conference. Now, a new book extends the exhibition's reach, moving beyond the gallery walls to underscore two central assertions: that the institutions of slavery and mass incarceration are historically linked, and that the resulting system has disproportionately harmed Black Louisianians. The book adapts the exhibition's narrative with profiles of people impacted by mass incarceration, spotlights on key historical objects, and illuminating infographics with updated data.

Captive State takes a chronological approach, tracing the history of Louisiana's carceral system: from its earliest incarnations in colonial times, through the development of the convict leasing system, to the establishment of the Angola state penitentiary on the grounds of a former plantation. It examines the rise in mass incarceration in the 20th and 21st centuries in the wake of "tough on crime" laws, and the human and financial costs of this system to communities. A striking epilogue compiles feedback and ideas left by exhibition visitors in response to the question, "If you could change Louisiana's incarceration system, where would you begin?"

Transforming the exhibition into book form posed some new challenges in using visual strategies to preserve, and in some cases enhance, the exhibition content. Among the most powerful features of the exhibition were video interviews with incarcerated people and a time-lapse illustration of the development of New Orleans's jail complex—multimedia elements that don't readily translate to a static page. Senior Editor Nick Weldon selected key excerpts from the testimonials and worked with book designer Benjamin Purvis to pair them with data graphics and photographs that enhanced first-person anecdotes about life sentences, prison hospice, and convict labor. One data graphic developed exclusively for the book compares the Orleans Parish jail campus at its largest extent (2005) with its present-day footprint, while charting the site's development since the 1930s.

"These multimedia features were essential to the gallery experience," Weldon says. "The book gave us an opportunity to bring these



NEW FROM HNOC

Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration

by Eric Seiferth, Katherine Joliff Dunn, and Kevin T. Harrell (curators) and Nick Weldon (editor)

softcover • 9" x 11" • 106 pp. • 57 color images

\$19.95

Support provided by Spark Justice Fund at Borealis Philanthropy



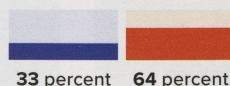
DEMOGRAPHICS¹⁶

The incarcerated populations in Louisiana and New Orleans are disproportionately Black.

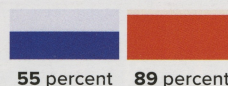
■ Percentage of Black people in the **general population**

■ Percentage of Black people in the **incarcerated population**

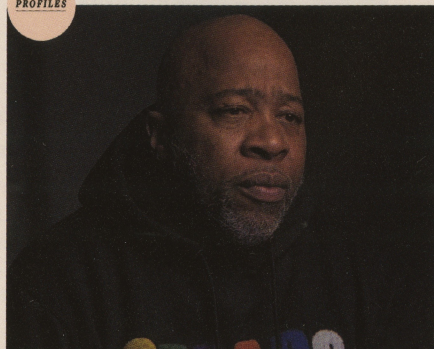
LOUISIANA



NEW ORLEANS



PROFILES



CURTIS DAVIS

"When I went [to Angola] in 1992, I was relegated directly to the field. We picked cotton, fruit products... They have a crawfish farm. They have pecan orchards. They have strawberries they grow there. They have okra, cotton, soybeans, corn for ethanol, and corn for eating. They have over five thousand head of

cattle that sell milk. They also sell black Angus cattle for beef processes. Eighteen thousand acres. The same size as Manhattan, New York....

"Slavery has never been abolished in these United States of America. It has been codified into law through the Thirteenth Amendment and the Louisiana Constitution."

This is excerpted from the transcript of an interview produced by the Promise of Justice Initiative, in partnership with Decarcerate Louisiana and Professor Andrea Armstrong at Loyola University New Orleans College of Law for the End Plantation Prisons project. Davis was pardoned and released in 2016 after serving nearly twenty-six years in prison.

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THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION



During the James lease, about three in four state prisoners were Black.



An average of 100 prisoners—one out of every seven—died each year under James's oversight.³

CAPTIVE STATE

The Convict Lease and Angola

The same year James purchased his plantations, Louisiana passed a law reducing the requirement for criminal conviction from unanimity to nine of twelve jurors. The state would also update vagrancy laws and introduce multiple misdemeanor provisions. All of these legal changes helped to transform the demographics and increase the size of the state prison population. Over the course of thirty years, James used this captive and predominantly Black workforce to create profit and wealth for himself and his family. Thousands of people died under his oversight.

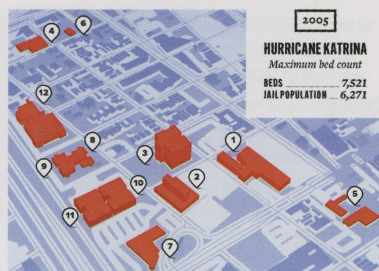
The state chose not to renew the James lease following its expiration in 1900. In 1901 Louisiana purchased most of the plantations from his estate, which came to be known collectively by a single name: Angola. By 1908, 1,600 people were incarcerated by the State of Louisiana on plantations where cotton, sugarcane, corn, peas, cattle, and hogs were cultivated. Today the site remains in operation as the Louisiana State Penitentiary, a prison farm that has operated continuously with forced labor for nearly two hundred years. In many ways, the conditions experienced by people incarcerated at Angola changed little into the twentieth century.⁴

¹ Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another*, 3.

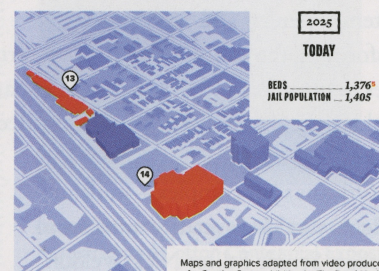
² Louisiana, *Report of the Senate Committee*, 4.

³ Carleton, *Politics and Punishment*, 46; 89; Mancini, 146; Hays, "Hourlong Democracy"; 133; Aikie, *Jim Crow's Last Stand*; 23; Carleton, "Convict Lease System," 20153.

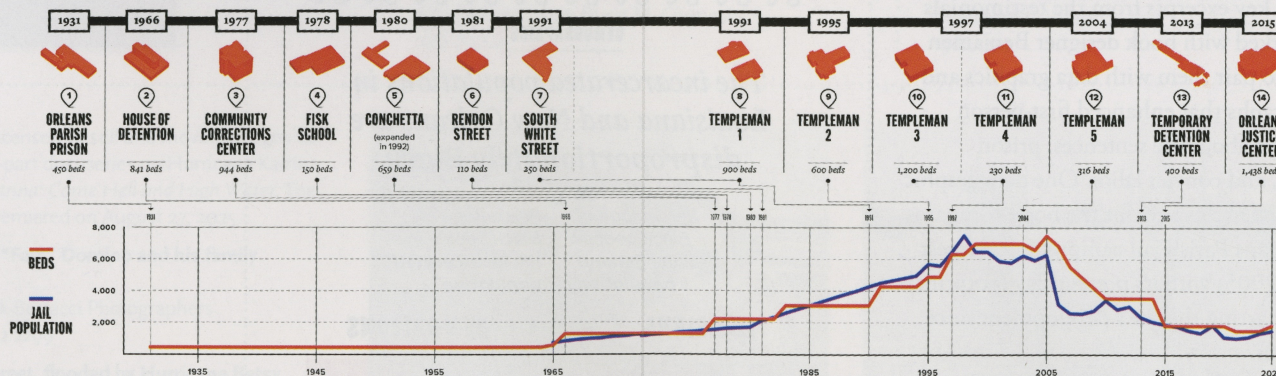
49



Building continued, and by Hurricane Katrina (August 2005) the area at Tulane and Broad included over a dozen separate jail facilities that housed men, women, and juveniles awaiting trial, as well as people in work-release programs and state prisoners. At its largest, in 2005, the Orleans Parish Prison campus had 7,521 beds.⁵



Maps and graphics adapted from video produced for *Captive State* exhibition by The Bend Media.



76

THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

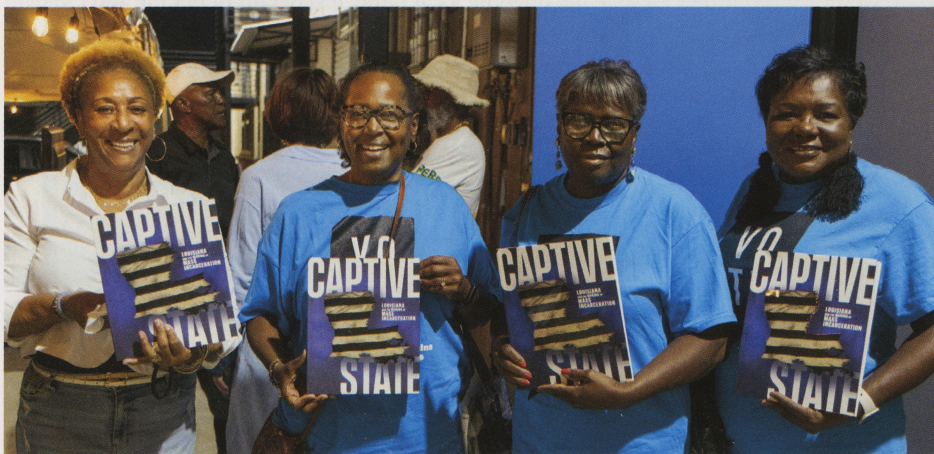
CAPTIVE STATE

77

personal stories into context with data and photography from other parts of the exhibition in a way that will help readers connect the dots on some of the key themes of *Captive State*.”

The *Captive State* exhibition had strong community roots, growing out of a collaboration between HNOC and a community advisory board comprising activists, formerly incarcerated people, and victim advocates. “I think the best work that we do is when challenging history meets and confronts memory in the way *Captive State* did so well,” says Director of Institutional Advancement Heather L. Hodges. “Every one of the community members who contributed to the exhibition—as advisors, as survivors, as storytellers, panel speakers, performers, reformers, and visitors—shared with us memories and experiences that held a different piece of the puzzle we needed to understand the impacts of mass incarceration on our city.” In order to continue building connections to the community after the exhibition opened, the Collection also worked with an outside firm to do outreach to community groups and facilitate their visits to the museum. Hodges says that these efforts “build a foundation of faith in our audiences that our subsequent work, like the book, will be as resonantly relevant [as the exhibition].”

In October, advisory board members, HNOC staff, and community partners gathered at the Voice of the Experienced (VOTE) headquarters to celebrate the book’s launch. “The curators were intentional about leaning on community expertise when developing this exhibition,” Weldon says, “and it was important to us that the book be released alongside the same people who informed *Captive State*’s development through lived experience.” Throughout the fall, Weldon and the book’s authors also participated in a number of community events, including HomeFest on New Orleans’s Bayou Road, the Louisiana Book Festival in Baton Rouge, the Words and Music Festival, and the Morris Bart Sr. Lecture Series at the New Orleans Jewish Community Center. Events like these bring *Captive State*’s enduring message to new audiences, encouraging readers to learn, reflect, and respond to the thought-provoking questions that this narrative poses. —HNOC STAFF



A

A. Vallarie Burris, Detra Ward, Elizabeth Johnson, and Catrice Walker



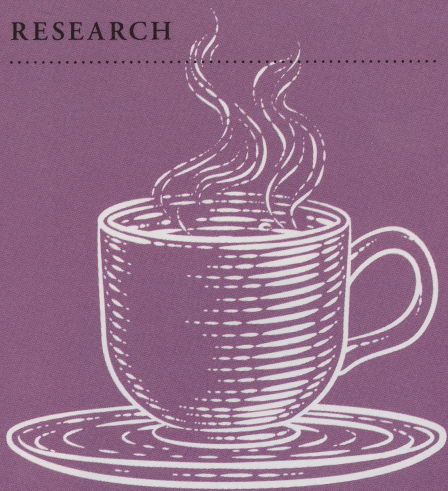
B

B. HNOC board member Tod Smith, advisory committee member Andrea Armstrong, and Nick Weldon



C

C. Lamont Gross, Sara Gozalo, advisory committee member Anthony Hingle Jr., and Grace Bronson



If visitors to the city had but an hour or two to spare, they journeyed hastily down to the long market below Jackson Square [and] drank genuine Creole coffee. There was no other coffee in the world just like it.

—*The Times-Picayune*, 1915

A Rose Is a Rose

New research about New Orleans's famed coffee seller Rose Nicaud shows both the precariousness and the possibilities of urban enslavement.

Coffee has long been a cultural hallmark of New Orleans, and no one has better represented the beverage's historic role in city life than Rose Nicaud, who sold coffee in the French Market for more than 40 years. Born enslaved, Nicaud worked selling coffee on Sundays to earn extra money, eventually gaining her freedom at the age of 27 or 28. She has come to symbolize all the women of color who ranked among the city's coffee sellers in the 19th century. Despite her ongoing local fame, few details of her life and her business have been reported until now. The pieces of her life story that can be culled from surviving sources help paint a more complete picture of the legendary coffee seller.



A

A. Coffee stand, French Market
between 1885 and 1900; hand-colored
glass slide
gift of Mr. and Mrs. Elvert M. Cormack,
1981.290.49

B. Old Slave Barracks, 919–925 Chartres St.
between 1930 and 1939
by Pops Whitesell
2001.68.1



B

The earliest records of Rose Nicaud's life relate to her status as an enslaved person. Rose was born in 1812 or 1813 in the possession of Diego Morphy, the Spanish consul to New Orleans. Morphy (grandfather to chess champion Paul Morphy) lived with his family in a house and outbuildings on the downriver side of Iberville Street in the French Quarter. She was the third of six known children of Nelly, an enslaved woman who was born in approximately 1784.

As enslaved people, Rose and her relatives lived under the constant threat of sale. That threat became real on December 7, 1819, when Nelly, six-year-old Rose, and her five siblings, ranging in age from 16 years to 18 months, were sold by the Widow Louise (Peire) Morphy to Paul Rossignol des Dunes Poincy. A native of St. Marc, Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti), Poincy belonged to a network of commercial bakers from Saint-Domingue, which also included the Nicaud and Bouny families.

The 1819 sale to Poincy was the first of six transactions between 1819 and 1839 in which Rose and her family were sold to and among this closely linked group of bakers. These sales would have disrupted daily lives but, thankfully, did not result in Rose's separation from her kin. The association with an interconnected network of urban enslavers in the same neighborhood allowed Rose's family to remain intact.

The Poincy Bakery was located in what is now the 500 block of Dumaine Street and consisted of a complex of buildings stretching back to parallel Madison Street. In 1831, Rose and her family were sold to baker Michel Nicaud, who operated his own commercial baking enterprise around the corner from the Poincy Bakery, at 919–925 Chartres Street.

Rose grew up and worked as a *marchande de pain* or *vendeuse de pain*, a street vendor selling bread, as did her mother and her sisters Venus, Becky, and Fanny. Her younger brother Denis initially worked as a *marchand* but later became a baker like their brother Victor. Work as bakers and vendors allowed urban enslaved people like Rose and her siblings more



Rose. C'ilà qui vende café enbas la halle.

Rose, who sells coffee in the french market.

C. Rose, Who Sells Coffee in the French Market

hand-colored lithograph by
Léon Joseph Frémaux
from *New Orleans Characters*
(New Orleans: Peychaud and
Garcia, 1876)

L. Kemper and Leila Moore
Williams Founders Collection,
1951.78

E. People of different races and social statuses mingle in the French Market

1867

by James Earl Taylor, from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*

1982.93

freedom of movement than that of people enslaved on rural plantations, as well as more opportunities for interaction with the wider population. As one white urban Southerner described the enslaved population, "They are divided out among us and mingled up with us, and we with them in a thousand ways."

In late 1838, Michel Nicaud began the process of manumitting Rose by petitioning the Orleans Parish Police Jury, the governmental body responsible for keeping order among the enslaved population and policing runaways. The police jury considered and favorably ruled upon Nicaud's petition in two meetings held November 30, 1838, and March 1, 1839. Though the actual notarial act granting Rose her freedom has yet to be found, it was undoubtedly recorded at some point between the police jury's March 1839 meeting and June 1840, when, at age 27 or 28, she was enumerated in the federal census for the first time as a free woman of color and as head of her own household.

It was around this time, in the early 1840s, that Rose began selling coffee in the French Market. Other members of her family were still enslaved; her siblings were counted in the household of Michel Nicaud. The December 1840 inventory of his estate included 54 enslaved men, 21 enslaved women, and 3 enslaved small children. Rose's family members are not the only enslaved people who appear alongside her in the historical record. By the time of the 1850 federal census, Rose, who was enumerated under the name Rose Williams, lived in the French Quarter with two young women whom she enslaved. A search of the conveyance books for New Orleans in the 1850s reveals that Rose purchased and sold at least three young women during that decade. The prices of enslaved people skyrocketed during these years, making them lucrative capital investments. For Rose, the purchase and subsequent sale of these women may have been a path to economic security.



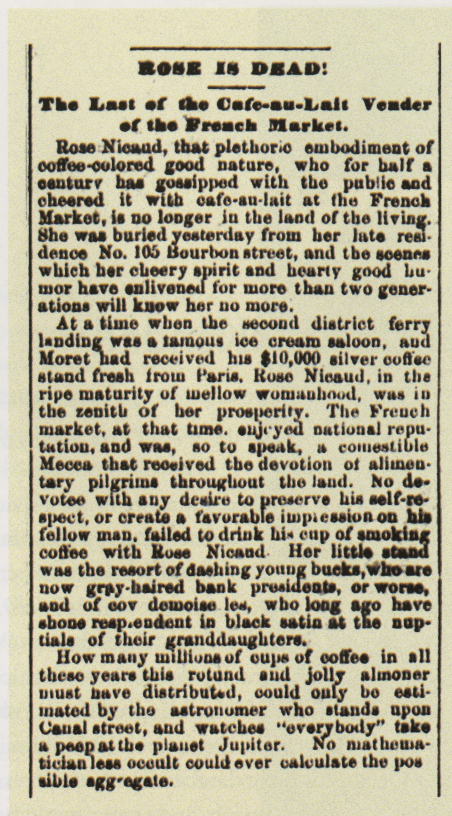
PICTURES OF NEW ORLEANS—THE BAZAAR, SUNDAY MORNING—THE CELEBRATED FRENCH MARKET.—FROM A SKETCH BY JAN. E. TAYLOR.—SEE PAGE 112.

For many women at the time, marriage was another means of pursuing financial stability. On February 13, 1855, Rose married free man of color Oscar Nezat at St. Augustine Church, just outside of the French Quarter in Faubourg Tremé. Rose and Oscar were enumerated together in the 1860 federal census, which identifies Oscar as a laborer. Their marriage ended with divorce after 13 years, in February 1868—although even into the 1870s, Rose is sometimes listed in city directories as Mrs. Oscar Nezat. She also appears as Rose Williams, but she is most often listed as Rose Nicaud. No known surviving records explain why Rose chose the surname Williams or why, years after being manumitted by Michel Nicaud, she retained his name. It may have been organic, with people ascribing the surname to her from when she lived in his household. It is also possible that her use of Nicaud was strategic, shaping perception by connecting the French Market coffee stand Rose opened shortly after gaining her freedom to a well-known French Quarter bakery in customers' minds.

Over her decades in business, Rose and her coffee stand gained renown, appearing in the local press and literary dispatches from the city. George Washington Cable, who wrote for *The Daily Picayune* from 1865 to 1879, included a reference to Rose in his 1884 novel *Dr. Sevier*. In it, a New Orleans Creole named Narcisse has just left “the celebrated coffee-stand of Rose Nicaud.” “I dunno by what fawmule she makes that coffee,” he says in his heavy Creole accent, “but ’tis astonishin’ how good.”

Rose Nicaud died of apoplexy on September 13, 1880, at the age of 68. The next day, her remains were led from her last residence on Bourbon Street to Square 3 of St. Louis Cemetery No. 2, at North Claiborne and Bienville Streets. She was interred in the imposing tomb of the Société des Fleurs de Marie, an antebellum benevolent society made up of women of color. Her death was noted on the front page of *The Daily States* on September 15, 1880, the headline declaring, “Rose Is Dead! The Last of the Café-au-Lait Vender[s] of the French Market.”

This laudatory reflection demonstrates the success that Rose Nicaud achieved in making her place of business a landmark and gathering place for New Orleanians. She was so successful, in fact, that nearly a half century later, local writer Catherine Cole included the coffee seller in a promotional pamphlet called *The Story of the Old French Market*: “Her coffee was like the benediction that follows after prayer; or if you prefer it, like the benedictine after dinner.” The presence of “Old Rose,” Cole said, was still “embalmed in the amber” of local memory. Though another century has passed, she remains that way. —JARI C. HONORA



E. *The Daily States*

September 15, 1880

courtesy of City Archives and Special Collections, New Orleans Public Library

F. Tomb of the Société des Fleurs de Marie

courtesy of Jari C. Honora



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ON THE JOB

Joshua McKendall

POSITION: Web developer, on staff since 2022

ASSIGNMENT: Make the Vieux Carré Survey online user interface easier to use

If you've ever researched addresses in the French Quarter, you've probably run across the Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Survey (vcs.hnoc.org), an incredible—and free to use—collection of maps, photographs, and architectural information maintained by HNOC. You can type in any address, name, or phrase—*1014 Dumaine*, *Thomy Lafon*, *French Market*, *Creole cottage*—and the Vieux Carré Survey (VCS) not only shows you historic images but follows the chain of each property's ownership, starting in the 1700s and going up to the 1980s. You can look for buildings of historical or architectural importance, see pictures of beautiful balconies, even search by building material. First compiled on paper in the early 1960s, this huge database has been accessible online since the early 2000s. But it was originally tricky to search, and results could be confusing: *What are all these images and abbreviations?* I was asked to overhaul the user interface, and after a year of intense redesign, I'm happy to say that the VCS is now prettier and easier to use, whether you're looking for specific information or browsing for fun.

People often assume web developers spend all their time building frameworks and application backends; they don't realize how much work I put into an interface's aesthetics. Matching content to the right organizational structure and look requires skills in visual art as well as programming. Fortunately, I've been developing both since high school, when I studied art and illustration at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and, in my free time, played around with HTML, JavaScript, and CSS in the early days of the web.

Graphic design isn't just about making things pretty, though; it's about accessibility and understanding users' needs. Since devices and people's vision vary, color can't be the only

thing telling someone where to click; you have to use contrast. Hierarchies of complex information must make sense to first-time visitors. The VCS website needed to organize and display everything from huge maps down to the Vieux Carré Commission's detailed evaluations of individual buildings—e.g., 1208 Decatur Street is “a typical Greek Revival structure with simple square-headed openings and denticulated cornice.” The first thing I did was make images bigger and add options to click on different pieces of information, to make it easier to find relationships among properties.

In a way, my redesign of the website began at my HNOC job interview, when I presented a mock-up of what a more navigable VCS might look like. I didn't start actively reworking the interface until HNOC launched its updated website in 2025, but my early instincts proved to be pretty good: The landing page today looks a lot like what I presented in 2022.

What my mock-up didn't predict was the tangle of code I found inside the VCS's backend. The maze wasn't anyone's fault; the code had been assembled over more than a decade, by developers using

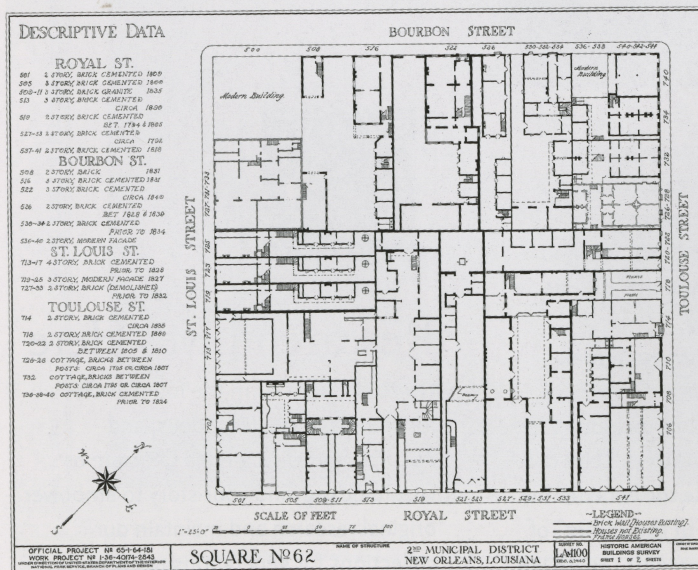
A. WPA Square 62 site map for 713–717 St. Louis Street and surrounding properties

1940

by E. E. Loving, delineator

Historic American Buildings Survey: Survey No. LA-1100

Collins C. Diboll Vieux Carré Digital Survey at HNOC



different tools and organization systems. New features, such as the option to search for free people of color, were constantly being tacked on. The piecemeal construction produced not only a complicated user interface but also a disorganized and confusing backend. An improvement I'm particularly proud of is one that's invisible to you: I unified and tidied up all that code, so future developers will find it easier to update.

Ease of use invites browsing, which facilitates discovery. I was no exception: One casual inquiry took me down a rabbit hole that turned into an emotional experience. I noticed that 713–717 St. Louis St., the building that houses Antoine's Restaurant, was once owned by a free man of color named François Lacroix, and on a whim, I tracked him through his property listings. Eventually I became intrigued enough to go beyond the VCS and look into his story. A wealthy Creole tailor, Lacroix lived through the Civil War only to endure his son Victor—a civil rights activist and war veteran—being murdered during the Mechanics' Institute Massacre of 1866, in which a white mob attacked a group of demonstrators peacefully marching for Black suffrage. Moved by the tragedy, I read on and learned that seances were held in an attempt to contact Victor, which introduced me to the Spiritualist movement important to many Black New Orleanians in the 19th century.

Pulling the thread of a property owner opened up a whole window on post–Civil War New Orleans, one I think about whenever I walk past Antoine's on my way to work. The kinder, gentler VCS interface gives users anywhere in the world the chance to pull similar threads of the French Quarter's rich history. —JOSHUA MCKENDALL

The Collins C. DeLoach
Vieux Carré Digital Survey

Search Tips Maps Links History

713-717 St. Louis St.
Square: 62 Lot Number: 18099

Vieux Carré Commission Evaluation:

No change: main and service buildings -- green; sheds in courtyard -- brown. Owned by the Alcatorre family since 1866, this 3-story porticoed masonry townhouse with two detached service buildings was constructed c. 1824 for Pierre Edmond Foucher. C. 1870 alterations added the mansard roof and cast iron columns to the first floor of the originally Creole style architecture.

Portion of Building: Sheds

Material: Masonry

Note: partially of wood

Portion of Building: Service buildings

Material: Masonry

Material: Main

Material: Masonry

Street Images

Square Images

Dimensions

	Frontage	
	50' 9" 0"	
2	101' 2" 0"	
3	10' 1" 0"	
4	14' 9" 4"	
5	40' 8" 0"	
6	117' 2" 0"	

Close

B



C

B. The VCS page for 713–717 St. Louis Street brings together architectural notes with historical photographs and maps of the surrounding area.

C. Billhead for clothing store owned by François Lacroix and Etienne Cordeville

1840

L. Kemper and Leila Moore Williams Founders Collection, 1955.27

STAFF NEWS

New Hires

Britt Benoit, graphic designer. **Kathryn Gsell**, membership and annual giving associate. **David Kern**, visitor services assistant.

Speaking Engagements

Several HNOC staff were guests on WBOK's morning show *The Front Porch*, which has been hosting monthly live broadcasts at the Collection. In August, Education Specialist **Chantell Nabonne** spoke about the upcoming *The Trail They*

Blazed Family Day event. Senior Editor **Nick Weldon**, Senior Historian **Mark Cave**, and Family Historian **Jari C. Honora** appeared on the show in September. In October, Manager of Programs **Amy Dailey Williams** and Curator/Historian **Eric Seiferth** discussed upcoming events at HNOC.

The celebrated Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival ended its 20-year run in 2025, making a graceful exit with a theme of "Last Call." Senior Editor **Margit Longbrake** served as an invited scholar at the festival's

Tennessee Williams Institute, where she talked with graduate students about exits in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Internship Coordinator **Sydney Wessinger** spoke at a roundtable on redefining museum internships at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Museums Conference.

At the Gulf South History and Humanities Conference in October, Visitor Services Assistant **Winston Ho** spoke on the history of New Orleans's Chinatown. He also presented about coastal Louisiana's Chinese and Filipino fishing villages at the 1882 Foundation's Rural Chinatowns and Hidden Sites Conference. In September, he discussed the influence of Chinese food on New Orleans cuisine on Poppy Tooker's radio show *Louisiana Eats!*

Decorative Arts Curator **Lydia Blackmore** gave a presentation to the Old Mandeville Historic Association on the preservation of 533 Royal Street. She also spoke to the Silver Study Society at Bayou Bend, the house museum at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Director of Institutional Advancement **Heather L. Hodges** was a guest speaker for the panel program "If History Is Hot, Why Are Museum Admissions Declining?" at the annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History.

Collections Cataloger **Kevin T. Harrell** gave a paper entitled "Kinship, Peace, and the Roots of War: The Alabamas and Coushattas as Diplomatic Mediators in Creek Politics" at the American Society for Ethnohistory conference in San Antonio. He also discussed *Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration* with the Round Table Club in New Orleans.

At Boston's Family Heritage Experience, **Jari C. Honora** participated in a panel discussion for the opening of an exhibition on Pope Leo XIV's Creole heritage.



In September, the Collection welcomed **Erin M. Greenwald**, PhD, as deputy director. Greenwald brings expertise in Louisiana history, public programming, and project management, most recently serving as a consultant for the redesign of the interpretive spaces at the Collection's campus at 533 Royal Street.

Greenwald was previously vice president of public programs at the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), where she oversaw statewide program development and implementation, grant-making, and publishing. At the LEH, Greenwald also served as editor in chief

of *64 Parishes* magazine. During her tenure, *64 Parishes* received local, regional, and national journalism awards and was named best magazine for three years running by Louisiana's oldest press club association.

Prior to her work at LEH, Greenwald was a curator and historian at HNOC. She curated numerous exhibitions, including *Purchased Lives: New Orleans and the Domestic Slave Trade*, which received a Leadership in History Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History and went on to travel the country under a competitive exhibition grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In her role as deputy director, Greenwald will oversee HNOC's divisions of collection development and exhibitions, audience engagement, digital services, and publications, as well as the Williams Research Center. She will also continue to lead the development of the interpretive areas at 533 Royal Street.

INTERN SPOTLIGHT

Emma Thomas

PLACEMENT: HNOC education department, creating a virtual map of local chess history

SEASON: Summer 2025



Emma Thomas is a New Orleans native and graduating senior at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, majoring in history. Along with Education and Outreach Specialist Kendric Perkins, Emma worked to develop an interactive virtual map that chronicles the history of competitive chess in New Orleans. By incorporating images, articles, and resources for further scholarly research, the map not only preserves historical data but also provides an accessible platform for both academic inquiry and public engagement. Emma states, "Chess has often been overlooked as a critical component of social and intel-

lectual heritage; however, I want this map to highlight the diverse set of players who have contributed to the competitive chess scene in the city. By foregrounding these varied narratives—particularly those involving marginalized communities—the project expands the overall understanding of competitive chess players' contributions beyond traditional accounts."

This innovative project serves as an important digital repository that documents significant locations integral to the city's rich chess heritage and offers a compelling exploration of how cultural diversity and communal support intersect within a unique urban context. Emma says, "Like everything in New Orleans, the local chess scene would be nothing without the love and support of people from all walks of life. My research was motivated not only by my love for chess, but also by an appreciation of the cultural diversity within the city and the way that understanding our heritage can bring those cultures together." —SYDNEY WESSINGER

Associate Curator **Libby Neidenbach** and Exhibition Designer **Cecilia Moscardó** spoke at the Women in Funeral Service Luncheon during the annual meeting of Selected Independent Funeral Homes. Their presentation helped attendees understand how museum curation and exhibition design relate to the creation of meaningful celebrations of life.

In the Community

President and CEO **Daniel Hammer** has been appointed to the board of the US

National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-US).

Major Gifts and Stewardship Officer **Heather Nelson** was accepted into the 2025 Bryan Bell Metropolitan Leadership Forum, hosted by Community for a Better New Orleans.

Awards

Jari C. Honora was selected as one of *Ebony* magazine's 2025 Power 100, which recognizes influential Black leaders, artists, and activists.

Heather L. Hodges was part of a team that won the 2025 Excellence in Interpretation Award from the National Park Service. She also had a documentary film about traditional Louisiana music, *Shouter/Rocker*, accepted into the 2025 New Orleans Film Festival.

The Consulate General of France in New Orleans presented the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, one of France's highest distinctions, to **Erin M. Greenwald** for her work in public history.

HNOC was honored with eight 2025 Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) Awards: two Exhibition Awards and six Technology Awards. The SEMC Awards highlight excellence in the museum field in our region.

Captive State: Louisiana and the Making of Mass Incarceration

- Gold Exhibition Award
- Gold Technology Award for Virtual Media: *In Their Words: Captive State Incarceration Testimonials*
- Silver Technology Award for Media Production: *A Deliberate Retreat: New Orleans's Shifting Jails*

Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans

- Gold Technology Award for Gallery Installations: Oral History Table
- Gold Technology Award for Media Production: Lantern Video Projection
- Silver Technology Award for Virtual Media: *Pham-Vu Family Journey: How One Family Made It Home*

Unknown Sitters

- Silver Exhibition Award

HNOC.org Website Redesign

- Gold Technology Award for Digital Marketing

Heather L. Hodges was also presented with the 2025 SEMC Museum Leadership Award.



FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

Lee Adler and Robert Marks

"I'm an architecture nut," confesses Lee Adler, who says he grew up designing houses as a hobby. On the weekends, Lee and husband Robert Marks like to walk through different pockets of their Uptown neighborhood, admiring the houses' colorful front doors, intricate dormer windows, and other architectural features.

Both New Orleans natives, Lee and Robert have deep roots in the city. "The city has a great history, and it's really a good meshing of different folks from different backgrounds," says Robert. "I feel like the city of New Orleans, we do a good job—maybe other parts of the South don't do such a good job of really meshing people together. I think we do a good job."

Lee spent time in Nashville for college and New York City after law school, before returning home 34 years ago, while Robert is a lifelong resident who experienced life in different parts of the country as a travel nurse and now owns a healthcare consulting firm. "Everybody should wish to have someone like Robert on their side when they're in the hospital," says Lee, who practices corporate law with Phelps.

Lee has also volunteered his time with educational organizations, including charter school Success at Thurgood Marshall, literacy

program STAIR (Start the Adventure in Reading), and Breakthrough New Orleans (formerly Summerbridge), an academic program that seeks to prepare under-resourced middle school students for higher education. Robert served as the board chair of Second Harvest Food Bank for three years, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When a mutual friend introduced the two in 2000, Robert was traveling back and forth to Washington, DC, for his job as a travel nurse, so the connection didn't initially head anywhere. Six months later, though, he and Lee happened to run into each other downtown on a spring day. "Easter Sunday is fun in the French Quarter," Lee reminisces, smiling.

The couple now live only a few blocks from where Lee grew up, in a historic home that has seen its share of changes over the years. Originally a double shotgun, it was converted to a single, and then they added a camelback five years ago, during the pandemic. Lee compares the stripped-down structure to an offshore supply vessel, noting that the work "left the front wall and a few other walls, but even the exterior walls mostly went away."

The renovations were finished in early 2021, just in time for an intimate wedding

at home. Afterward, in keeping with social distancing guidelines, the newlyweds drove around Orleans, Jefferson, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany Parishes and delivered mini wedding cakes to family to share the happy news.

In their spare time, the two enjoy spending time with friends and exploring the city with out-of-town visitors, whether that means taking the ferry to Algiers Point or checking out the wig selection at Fifi Mahony's.

"One of the things that I like about New Orleans is that there's always something to do, and it's not just a big festival. We have great festivals, but there's just always something fun to do, something to look at. It's a walk in the park; it's a walk through the French Quarter," says Robert. He is also an ambitious chef who enjoys re-creating restaurant dishes like *pâté en croûte*: "The more difficult the recipe, the better."

Reflecting on their 20-year membership at HNOC, Lee recalls, "I knew about the museum and always enjoyed seeing what was in the exhibit space on the main floor [of the original 533 Royal Street campus]. Inevitably, it would be interesting and led us to believe strongly that the HNOC is worthy of support." Some favorites have included the inaugural exhibition at the 520 Royal Street campus, *Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina*, as well as the more recent *Making It Home: From Vietnam to New Orleans*. "It's hard to pick, because every one of the exhibits is amazing," says Robert.

Over the decades, the couple, who are now members of the Laussat Society, have seen changes in the ways that HNOC's programming reflects the community. "I think that the exhibits have done a very good job of trying to embrace a broader spectrum of the population," says Lee. "So it embraces the diverse culture and the many facets of life in the metropolitan area." —SIOBHÁN MCKIERNAN

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Tribute gifts are given in memory or in honor of a loved one.

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Brown-Taylor Development LLC in memory of Peter
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Amanda Cassidy in memory of Carol Ann Schmidt
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Spire Communications and Marketing in memory of Carol
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Holly L. Sullivan in memory of Peter Michael Trapolin
Bettie and Michael Trainer in memory of Carol Ann
Schmidt
Voelkel McWilliams Construction LLC in memory of Peter
Michael Trapolin
Sara Williams and Isaac Trapolin in memory of Peter
Michael Trapolin

Bookplates

Donations are used to acquire or maintain books that are marked with a commemorative bookplate.

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of Elizabeth
"Betty" Killeen—*Clothing and Fashion in Southern
History* by Ted Ownby and Becca Walton, editors
(University Press of Mississippi, 2020)
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of Dr. Alfred E.
Lemmon—*Spanish Louisiana: Contest for Borderlands,
1763–1803* by Frances Kolb Turnbull (Louisiana State
University Press, 2024)
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of Justice
Harry T. Lemmon—*Loyola University New Orleans
College of Law: A History* by Maria Isabel Medina
(Louisiana State University Press, 2016)
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of Fred M. and
Patricia "Pat" M. Smith—*Banking on Slavery: Financing
Southern Expansion in the Antebellum United States* by
Sharon Ann Murphy (University of Chicago Press, 2023)
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of Charles A.
Snyder—*Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish
Orphans' Home of New Orleans* by Marlene Trestman
(Louisiana State University Press, 2023)
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Lawrence in memory of John E.
Walker—*Draining New Orleans: The 300-Year Quest
to Dewater the Crescent City* by Richard Campanella
(Louisiana State University Press, 2023)



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Become a Member

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

There has never been a better time to join the Historic New Orleans Collection. All HNOC members enjoy the following benefits for one full year:

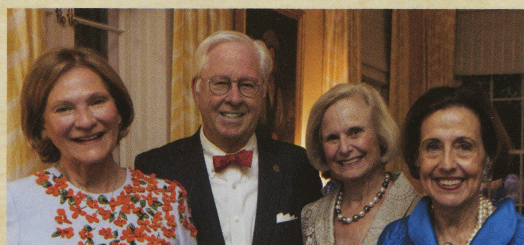
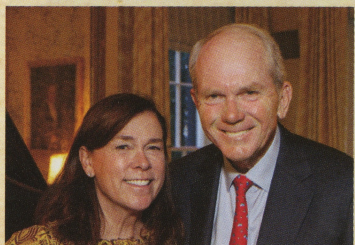
- 10 percent discount at the Shop at the Collection and the Café at the Collection
- exclusive invitations to opening receptions for new exhibitions
- early registration privileges for HNOC events
- subscription to the *Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly*
- free admission to select tours
- special invitations to events and trips

Members at the Merieult level and above receive benefits from the **North American Reciprocal Museum** program at more than 1,400 member institutions across the US, Canada, and Latin America. For more information, visit www.narmassociation.org.

HOW TO JOIN

Visit www.hnoc.org and click the **Support** link, or complete and return the enclosed envelope.

For more information about membership levels, please contact HNOC's development office at (504) 598-7172 or visit www.hnoc.org/support/membership.



On September 30, members and guests of the **Bienville Circle** and **Laussat Society** gathered at the home of Erika and Ted Elliott for "Héritage de la Liberté," an elegant evening in celebration and appreciation of HNOC's generous supporters. Guests enjoyed traditional Louisiana cuisine from Ralph Brennan Catering and Events and vibrant floral arrangements from Urban Earth Studios.

- A. Leatrice Siegel and Frances Salvaggio
 B. Deputy Director Erin M. Greenwald, Rep. Michael Bayham, and Director of Institutional Advancement Heather L. Hodges
 C. Boo Kallenborn and Board Vice Chair John Kallenborn
 D. Board member Lisa Wilson, Sonny and Laura Shields, and Pam Elliott
 E. Douglas and Elaine Grundmeyer
 F. President/CEO Daniel Hammer, Board Chair Bonnie Boyd, and Erika and Ted Elliott

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Founder Individual \$45
Founder Family \$75

Full membership benefits

Family memberships are for one or two adults and any children under 18 all residing in a single household, or for one member and a guest.

Merieult \$100

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- North American Reciprocal Museum (NARM) benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions

Caillot Circle Individual \$125

(ages 21–45)

Caillot Circle Couple \$200

(ages 21–45)

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- invitations to exclusive events throughout the year (both at the Collection and off-site)



The Caillot Circle is generously sponsored by New Orleans Auction Galleries.

Mahalia \$250–\$499

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- one additional guest admission for exhibition opening receptions

Jackson \$500–\$999

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC collections and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- two additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions

Laussat Society \$1,000–\$4,999

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC vault, collections, and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- three additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions

Bienville Circle \$5,000+

Full Founder Family benefits plus:

- NARM benefits at more than 1,400 member institutions
- private, guided tours of HNOC vault, collections, and exhibitions (by appointment)
- special members-only experiences
- invitation to annual gala evening and private patron event
- three additional guest admissions for exhibition opening receptions
- annual recognition as sponsors of a premier exhibition

ON THE SCENE

Going Once, Going Twice

An auction-themed August event gave **Caillot Circle** members a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the world of fine art and antiques collecting.

A. Participants bid on items including a cocktail class at Fives and stays at the Hotel Monteleone and Hotel Peter and Paul.

B. Joe Pilie and Lauren Ulf

C. Scott Tilton, Melina van Oers, and Rudy Bazenet



A



B



C

In July, staff gathered to celebrate the retirement of Visitor Services Assistant **Charlotte Hoggatt** after more than 40 years of service to the Collection.

D. Bunny Hinckley, Charlotte Hoggatt, and Head of Visitor Services Lori Boyer



D

The Trail They Blazed Family Day featured live music, hands-on activities, and gallery talks for all ages to learn more about the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans.

F. Dr. Leona Tate and a young visitor

G. Young Audiences of Louisiana led craft projects and story times.



F



G



E

At September's **"Oh, Freedom!" Gala**, Innocence and Justice Louisiana (formerly Innocence Project New Orleans) honored HNOC with the John Thompson Award for Courage and Justice for the exhibition *Captive State*.

E. Laverne Thompson and President/CEO Daniel Hammer. Photo courtesy of AshleyLorraine Photography.



The program **"Resistance: Three Centuries of Les Cenelles"** blended musical performance, lecture, and poetry to bring more than 300 years of Black cultural and literary resistance to life.

H. Deputy Director Erin M. Greenwald, Jeffery Darensbourg, and Lloyd Pratt

I. The modern-day Les Cenelles ensemble comprises Sultana Isham, Joseph B. Darensbourg, Denise Frazier, and Peter J. Bowling.

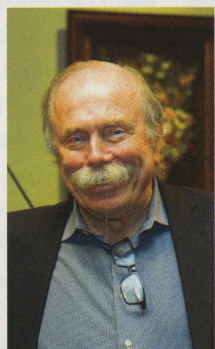


The 2025 **Morrison Lecture** focused on lessons learned and future opportunities for post-Katrina urban planning in New Orleans.

J. David Dixon

K. Jeff and Mary Kay Stevenson

L. Erin Holmes, board member Mayra Pineda, B. Mitchell, Marla Nelson, David Dixon, Daniel Hammer, Kim Rosenberg, and Nathan Chapman



The Collection welcomed a group from the **Keywords for Black Louisiana** project for a show-and-tell event in August.

M. The group viewed objects relating to colonial-era Black history. Photo courtesy of Heather L. Hodges.



In partnership with the **LGBT+ Archives Project of Louisiana**, an October program explored the history of the New Orleans chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian social and civil rights organization.

N. Frank Perez and Sharon Dauzat

O. Attendees enjoyed a show-and-tell of recently acquired objects from Dauzat's personal collection.

RELATED HOLDINGS



Rebecca, Charley, and Rosa, Slave Children from New Orleans

1863; albumen print
by Myron H. Kimball
1992.68.4



Our scouts and guides in 1863 in Baton Rouge

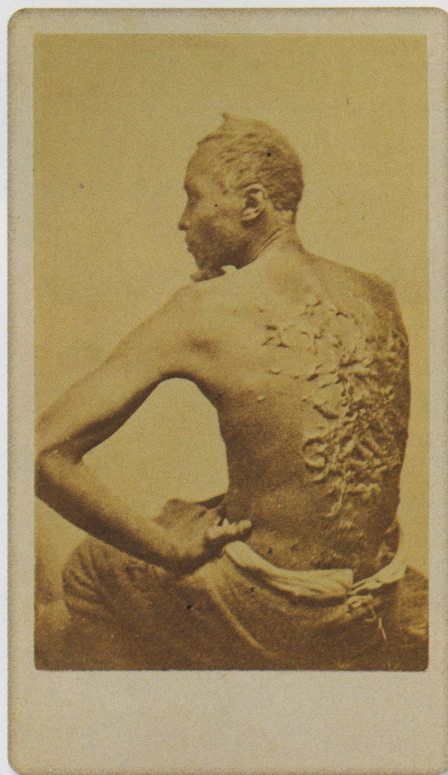
1863
by William D. McPherson and A. J. Oliver
2018.0234.7



Scene on a Southern Plantation
1868; hand-colored wood engraving
by A. W. Thompson
1981.56

ACQUISITION SPOTLIGHT

Photographic Proof



Carte de visite of "The Scourged Back" photograph

2025.0084.2

The man faces away from the camera, his face visible only in profile. His exposed back is covered in a heavy web of scars—the result of a violent punishment likely received the prior year while enslaved on a plantation. The untitled photograph, commonly referred to as “The Scourged Back,” is now among the most well-known images of the American slave system. Originally issued as an inexpensive and easily reprinted carte de visite in the spring of 1863, it circulated widely. (A carte de visite is a photographic print mounted to a card. Unlike daguerreotypes and ambrotypes, which are one-of-a-kind images, cartes de visite were created from a negative, allowing unlimited copies to be made.) By the summer of that year, the image had reached audiences across the nation via an engraved reproduction and

article in *Harper's Weekly*, quickly becoming a tool of the abolitionist cause.

Three different versions of “The Scourged Back” exist, but they are so similar that they have coalesced in popular memory as a single image. The photographs were taken, likely on two separate days, in Baton Rouge in 1863, attributed to photographers William D. McPherson and A. J. Oliver. The sitter has been most consistently identified as a formerly enslaved man from Louisiana, possibly named Gordon or Peter, who escaped from a nearby plantation and crossed into Union territory. By 1863 this type of action was becoming more commonplace, especially in Louisiana, where enslaved men, women, and children were fleeing to the protection of the Union Army in increasing numbers as part of a mass movement that historian W. E. B. DuBois described as “a general strike.” Many quickly took up support roles and eventually filled the ranks of what would become the United States Colored Troops, representing a surge in fighting power that became critical to US victory.

McPherson and Oliver had been working in Baton Rouge at least since Union occupation in the spring of 1862. The date range of their activity in Louisiana, as well as their subjects, clearly points to their involvement with the US army and the Union cause. HNOC holds a sampling of other images of theirs from the war years, most of which show buildings of the area as well as parts of Civil War campaigns in Baton Rouge and Port Hudson. Two related images made by the photographers in HNOC's collection depict slavery in the region: an 1863 image of a plantation, likely in Louisiana, showing enslaved people and their houses (1992.2.21) and an image known as “Our scouts and guides in 1863 in Baton Rouge”

(2018.0234.7) showing two young men, likely formerly enslaved, recently arrived in Union Army camps. Both images are cartes de visite, which allowed them to be quickly and cheaply made and disseminated.

Of all McPherson and Oliver's images, however, "The Scourged Back" had the widest reach, making a powerful impact on the nation's visual understanding of the first photographed war in the United States.

HNOC had sought a copy of this image for years, and in early 2025 we were able to purchase an example. The photograph enriches our holdings related to the Civil War, slavery in America, and photography. HNOC can also put the photograph into local context, as it was made in Louisiana and depicts a former Louisiana resident. This image had a meaningful impact on the American experience of the Civil War

and on the abolitionist cause. Over 160 years later, it continues to illustrate with photographic precision the violence and horrors of American chattel slavery. —ERIC SEIFERTH

"The Scourged Back" will be on view at the Williams Research Center (410 Chartres Street) from March through September 2026.

RECENT ADDITIONS

An Ill-Fated Railway and a Failed Campaign

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec: Being the Results of a Survey for a Railroad to Connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans

2025.0119.5

The mid-19th century saw growing demand for an intercoastal trade route. Economic opportunity on a grand scale—the gold rush in California; the opening of Pacific ports, like Shanghai and Hong Kong, to international trade—heightened the urgency to develop a corridor somewhere in Mexico or Central America. By mid-century, the serious candidates were a canal through northern Colombia, a canal through Nicaragua, a railroad across Panama, or a railroad across the 124-mile Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico.

Due to its relative proximity, the Mexican route promised to boost traffic through the port of New Orleans. But regional tensions—culminating in the Mexican-American War—would complicate the project's development. In 1842, a Mexican citizen named José de Garay received an initial commission to build the railroad. In 1847–48, Garay sold the commission to a pair of English financiers, who in turn transferred their rights to an American team: the New York-based Hargous Brothers company and a group of investors led by Louisiana lawyer and politician Judah P. Benjamin (1811–1884). Together, this group formed the Tehuantepec Railroad Company of New Orleans (TRCNO).

The US government supported TRCNO's endeavor, and in late 1850, a survey of the

isthmus was undertaken under the leadership of Army Major John G. Barnard (1815–1882). When Major Barnard and his team of 54 engineers and support staff arrived to survey the isthmus in December 1850, the Mexican government and its citizens were concerned that the deal would result in Mexico ceding more land to the United States. By the time the survey was completed, the Mexican congress had ruled that Garay's original commission was null and void because it had been issued to him by a provisional government. On May 15, 1851, President Mariano Arista ordered that all US citizens in Mexico be detained, and the engineering team was sent home.

Although the company's commission had been terminated, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec survey was published in 1852 by D. Appleton

and Company at the behest of TRCNO. The survey includes information about and illustrations of the gulfs on either side of the isthmus, as well as its topography, geography, climate, waterways, and inhabitants. It provides engineering reports, statistics, and projected costs of the railroad, an auxiliary carriage road, materials, equipment, and labor. To bolster TRCNO's claim to the project, the survey includes reprints of Garay's original grant documents so readers would "be enabled to judge to what extent the faith of Mexico has been plighted, and how far the Tehuantepec Railroad Company of New Orleans have been justified in the outlay they have made."

Collections items featured in Acquisitions might not be immediately available to view online or in the Williams Research Center reading room. Researchers can inquire about availability by emailing reference@hnoc.org.



ACQUISITIONS

A railroad across the isthmus was eventually completed in the early 20th century, but was soon eclipsed by the Panama Canal. More recently, the Mexican government has invested in rehabilitating the railway, which reopened for both freight and passenger traffic in late 2023. —NINA BOZAK

Dutch Morial campaign broadside

2025.0167

Almost a decade before he would become mayor of New Orleans, Ernest N. “Dutch” Morial (1929–1989) launched an early foray into local politics, pursuing an at-large seat on the New Orleans City Council in 1969. Morial faced off against Joseph DiRosa (1915–1997), a fellow attorney and former city council member who was a close political ally of then-Mayor Victor Schiro (1904–1992). Morial, an established leader of the Civil Rights Movement and former president of the New Orleans chapter of the NAACP, had in 1967 become the first Black member of the Louisiana legislature since Reconstruction. Despite receiving the endorsements of *The Times-Picayune*, *The States-Item*, *The Louisiana Weekly*, and then-city council member-at-large Moon Landrieu, Morial lost the race to DiRosa by 5,595 votes.

HNOC recently acquired a campaign broadside from this 1969 city council campaign. Similar advertisements ran in the

three local newspapers that endorsed him, though none appear to have used the same image of Morial, opting instead for a portrait. Nor did these advertisements incorporate text from Morial’s letter, which focuses on improving blight, drainage, and streets, and promises to “bring to New Orleans the type of efficiency in municipal government which is missing.”

After his unsuccessful bid for city council, Morial went on to serve as both a juvenile court judge and a judge with the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal before launching his mayoral campaign in 1977. That campaign saw him face off against DiRosa again with a different result, winning 6,214 more votes than his opponent and becoming the city’s first Black mayor. —AIMEE EVERRETT

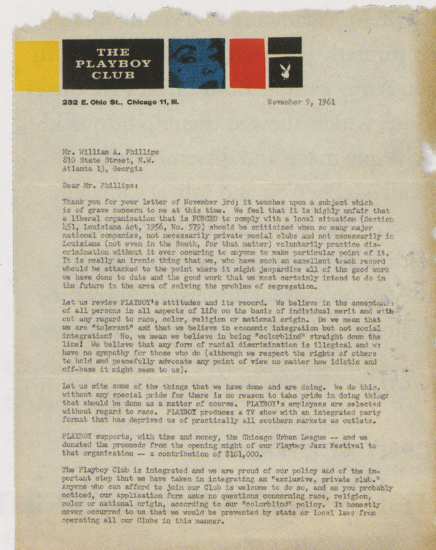
Hugh Hefner letter

gift of Robert Bruce Jackson,

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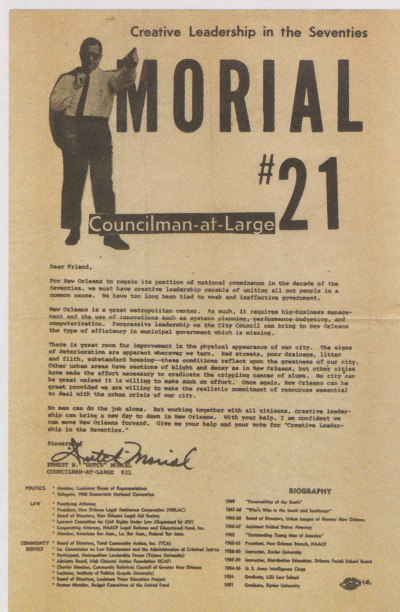
A 1961 letter from Hugh Hefner sheds light on the barriers to integrating the Playboy Club in New Orleans. Hefner (1926–2017) was the founder and publisher of *Playboy* magazine, which first came out in 1953. His then-progressive views about human sexuality, race, and society infused the magazine with a literary dimension, and it published some of the leading writers and journalists of the day. Notably, Hefner hired Black novelist Alex Haley to interview American Nazi Party founder George Lincoln Rockwell; that interview was later re-created on film with James Earl Jones portraying Haley and Marlon Brando as Rockwell.

In 1960, Hefner expanded the magazine’s branding by opening the first Playboy Club in Chicago, with additional clubs opening in Miami and New Orleans in 1961. Addressing a William Phillips of Atlanta, Hefner complains in this newly acquired letter that his organization is being criticized due to the segregation of its New Orleans club—segregation in keeping with the prohibition of “interracial activities involving personal and social contacts” under a 1956 Jim Crow law. “It is really an ironic thing that we, who have such an excellent track record would be attacked to the point where it might jeopardize all of



the good work we have done to date,” he writes, “and the good work that we most certainly intend to do in the future in the area of solving the problem of segregation.” Hefner points out that Playboy clubs in other cities admit members of all races, stating, “It honestly never occurred to us that we would be prevented by state or local laws from operating all our Clubs in this manner.” The letter goes on for three pages to outline the history of the New Orleans club’s early struggles to integrate as well as Playboy’s stance on racial equality.

The New Orleans club was located at 727 Iberville Street, between Bourbon and Royal. Under the guidance of local saxophonist Al Belletto, who served as director of entertainment, it became known for the quality of its music, particularly modern—rather than traditional—jazz. Regular and guest performers included pianist Ellis Marsalis and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie as well as young drummers Bruce Raeburn and Johnny Vidacovich, among many others. Ellis Marsalis, who played at the club six nights a week, later recalled that in the early 1960s, “the law didn’t allow us to play with white performers. We played downstairs, and then we backed up the black performers that came in.” The Civil Rights Act of 1964 allowed for the integration of both the club’s performers and its clientele, and the club remained open until 1974. Jazz historian Charles Suhor calls the club “a major force in the growth of modern jazz in New Orleans.” —JASON WIESE



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